

MCNR 302:

McNair Graduate Application Preparation

Fall 2022

Instructor: Dr. Cheryl Fortner

Credit Hours: 1 Grade Basis: S/U

Section 600 (CRN: 16380) Meets Fridays 2-3:30 pm in Dinkins 103

Prerequisites: Senior standing and current status as a Winthrop McNair Scholars Program Participant

Office Hours: Fridays 1-2 pm (before class) in Dinkins 104. Use calendly.com/cfw/mcnair for Zoom and in-person appointments. McNair Scholars can reach Dr. Fortner at fortnerc@winthrop.edu, 803/323-2125, or by texting her personal cell phone.

Course Description and Purpose

This course is specifically designed to address the second and third mandatory objectives of the Winthrop McNair Scholars Program: *50% of bachelor's degree recipients will enroll in a post baccalaureate program by the fall term of the academic year immediately following completion of that degree and 75% of graduates enrolled in graduate study the previous year will continue to be enrolled the following fall.* With support from the instructor, Writing Coach, and program staff, students in this course will prepare applications for graduate programs in the discipline of their choice, pursue graduate funding, and prepare for graduate program interviews.

Student Learning Outcomes – Each Student Will...

1. Identify at least 4 appropriate graduate programs to which to apply
2. Complete satisfactory application materials for at least 4 of those graduate programs, including statements of intent specific to each program
3. Secure letter of reference commitments from at least 3 individuals who have supervised their work at the university level, at least two of whom are faculty members
4. Successfully complete at least one mock interview (online or in person)
5. Develop at least one graduate fellowship, scholarship, or other graduate funding application mechanism to support their graduate study
6. Increase the competitiveness of their graduate application portfolio with evidence they are completing a high quality research product this semester
7. Demonstrate effective and professional electronic, phone, and written communication such as they should use with graduate program personnel

Syllabus Change Policy

The instructor reserves the right to make modifications to this syllabus when doing so facilitates student learning. Students will be notified of any modifications in class, through email and/or Blackboard announcements as early as possible. All students are responsible for the consequences of modifications once they are announced, regardless of class absences or failure to check Blackboard, or read email.

Grade Basis: S/U

To earn a grade of S (Satisfactory) in this course, students must attend class, fully participate in class activities, and complete classwork and homework assignments as per instructions and by the time and date specified by the instructor. Instructions for each assignment will be shared in class and/or via Blackboard.

Student Learning Activities - Class Participation, Reading, Leading Discussions, Research Product, Interviews, 1 Funding application, & 4 Graduate program applications. All assignments in this course are designed to help students learn about and successfully complete the graduate application process and prepare to succeed in graduate programs. Therefore a significant portion of each student's work in the course will be completed outside of class time. Students will research and choose appropriate graduate programs, complete program and funding application materials, ask and prepare reference portfolios for faculty, and build interviewing skills. Scholars will also lead our discussions of our readings.

In addition to weekly reading and the relevant homework assignments, students are required to provide proof of completing at least one mock interview. Students are also expected to participate in at least two 15-minute McNair applicant interviews Monday, 11/7. You will also submit a funding application draft (e.g., NSF, McKnight, Ford). Instead of a final exam for the culminating student learning activity, students will submit a portfolio of materials for four distinct, complete graduate program applications before the end of final exam week. If you submit 4 program applications this semester, you can provide snapshots of the successful submission page as proof to meet this final requirement.

Readings and Resources

Council of Graduate Schools (2021) *Making a Grad School Plan: From Application to Orientation*. Washington, DC.

Sharma, R. (2020). *The Unwritten Rules of Professional Etiquette: Building a positive reputation in graduate school*. Habile Press.

Grenny, J., Patterson, K., McMillan, R., Switzler, A., & Gregory, E. (2022). *Crucial conversations: Tools for talking when stakes are high*. McGraw Hill.

Sleigh, M., Iles, S., & Cannon, B. (Eds.). (2017). *An Eye on Graduate School: Guidance Through a Successful Application*. Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology: Chattanooga, TN. (We will refer to this ePub as "Eye on GS.")

McNair GA, Ashley Watson (BIOL undergrad & School Psyc grad student), provided this feedback regarding *Eye on GS*.

- Does reference psychology a lot in beginning chapters (1-2), but I think in most cases, scholars could replace "psychology" with their field of study and info will still apply
- Really like section about journals—finding schools that publish in journals w/ high impact factors (Ch. 3, pg 45)
- Good tips about organization/timeline for applications and finding good fit—especially in emotional sense (Ch. 4)
- Chapter 8 is very psych specific
- Like how they compare LOR & personal statements--how they can be complementary (Ch. 12)
- Good resource on pg. 269 when thinking about preparing a personal statement--good jumping off point
- Possible questions to ask during an interview may be helpful to some (Appendix)

Asher, D. (2012). *Graduate Admissions Essays: Write Your Way into the Graduate School of Your Choice*. (4rd ed.). New York: Ten Speed Press. (We will refer to this as "Asher.")

Dr. Don Asher's Website: www.DonaldAsher.com/ and YouTube Presentation on Getting into Competitive Graduate Programs <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kwks6-p12Qg>

Posselt, J. R. (2016). *Inside graduate admissions: Merit, diversity, and faculty gatekeeping*. Harvard University Press. (Copies available to borrow from the Winthrop McNair Library.)

Writing Coach – Stephanie Bartlett (bartletts@winthrop.edu) – Office Hours TRF 3:45-4:45 PM. As always, I'm available outside these hours via email. Please join my Zoom to discuss your writing (research manuscripts, personal statements, CVs, etc.) in any stage (pre-writing to revising/editing). My Zoom link is: <https://winthrop-edu.zoom.us/j/86583261852?pwd=Si95RFpNb0lOOTN5cWdUT0U0UzN5dz09>

National McNair Scholars Website: <https://mcnairscholars.com/funding/>

Winthrop University's Office of Nationally Competitive Awards (ONCA) identifies and assists highly motivated and talented students to apply for nationally and internationally competitive awards, scholarships, fellowships, and unique opportunities both at home and abroad. ONCA gathers and disseminates award information and deadlines across the campus community, and serves as a resource for students, faculty, and staff throughout the nationally competitive award nomination and application process. Scholars should be sure the information they shared with ONCA, through the online form during their summer research experience is updated. For more information, see the ONCA webpage (www.winthrop.edu/onca) and email onca@winthrop.edu.

April 15th resolution: <https://cgsnet.org/resources/for-current-prospective-graduate-students/april-15-resolution/>

Use of Course Videos

I am not planning recording class meetings. In the event that any recorded classes are shared, all students are required to follow the following policy (language adapted from Elon University's statement). *Recorded classes may not be used in any way that denigrates and/or decontextualizes the instructor or any student whose class remarks are recorded. Any information contained in the recorded class may not be posted, published or quoted without the express consent of the instructor and speaker, and if permission is granted, must be properly cited. All recordings of class lectures or discussions are to be erased at the end of the semester.*

Attendance Policy

Enrollment in this course is a privilege only allowed Winthrop's McNair Scholars. Your continued enrollment after the first class indicates acceptance of the instructor's discretion regarding timekeeping for the class and determinations of excused absences. Useful information will be shared during every class meeting. Students are required to participate in all class meetings for the entire class meeting. Having more than one *unexcused* absence will result (and has resulted) in a grade of U (Unsatisfactory) in the course. Missing more than half of any class meeting will be considered an absence. Joining class late more than once may also be counted as a class absence. If the instructor has granted prior approval, a student may substitute a high impact graduate admissions or graduate study preparation activity for a class absence.

Winthrop COVID-19 Syllabus Statements - Updated August 11 2022

COVID-19 Statement

The health and safety of the campus community is Winthrop's top priority. As socially responsible members of this community, everyone is expected to engage in daily health self-monitoring and to stay home (residence hall or off-campus housing) from on-campus class, work, or activities if they begin experiencing any COVID-related symptoms. Please do not attend class if you have a fever or any signs of the COVID virus, do not attend class if your roommate or someone you have close contact with acquires the virus, and be respectful of others' desire to remain COVID-free. Masking on campus remains optional but strongly encouraged, especially in indoor settings around others. Use the Patient Portal COVID-19 form to report illness or exposure and upload the positive test, if relevant. Students who violate WU guidelines will be asked to comply. Continued failure to comply may result in referral to the Dean of Students Office as a student conduct violation.

COVID-Related Absence

Students should contact Health Services regarding a positive test, close contact, or enhanced COVID-like symptoms. Any student who has either tested positive, has COVID-like symptoms, or has close contact with someone who has COVID, must contact Health Services. Students should log in to the [Patient Portal](#) to complete a C19 form and upload

the positive test, if relevant. Health Services will communicate with the student on what steps to take next, and if need be, the Dean of Students Office will receive absence verification for required isolation and quarantine. Students who verify their absences through the Dean of Students Office often minimize any academic impact caused by missed class time. Students retain a responsibility to communicate with instructors regarding missed work, and complete assignments in a timely manner as they are able. Regular communication with faculty is expected so that student progress in the course is not negatively impacted. Health Services will only provide dates of absence, not medical information. Please note, residential students who test positive must follow their personal COVID Quarantine and Isolation Plan.

In person classes generally will not have a remote option; students should not expect to have remote access to the class lecture or discussion, even in the case of absence.

Winthrop University is committed to providing accessible learning experiences and equal access to education for all students. The syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. If you are a student with a disability (including mental health concerns, chronic or temporary medical conditions, learning disabilities, etc.) and you anticipate or experience academic barriers due to the condition, please contact The Office of Accessibility (OA) for information on accommodations, registration, and procedures. After receiving approval for accommodations through OA, please make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely manner. **OA contact information: accessibility@winthrop.edu; 803-323-3290; <https://www.winthrop.edu/student-affairs/accessibility/>.**

Academic Success Center. ASC is a free resource for all undergraduate students seeking to perform their best academically. The ASC offers a variety of personalized and structured resources that help students achieve academic excellence, such as tutoring, academic skill development (test taking strategies, time management counseling, and study techniques), group and individual study spaces, and academic coaching. The ASC is housed on the first floor of Dinkins, Suite 106. Please contact the ASC at 803-323-3929 or success@winthrop.edu. For more information, visit www.winthrop.edu/success.

Writing Center (from www.winthrop.edu/wcenter). The Writing Center (WC) provides free writing consultations using both face-to-face tutoring in 242 Bancroft Hall Center and online tutoring. This service is available to all members of the University community: students, staff, administrators, and faculty. The WC's purpose is to help writers at all levels learn more about their writing through tutoring sessions. WC Tutors help writers analyze assignments, address audiences appropriately, improve their composing processes, strengthen the focus and organization of their writing, and improve their control of the language. The Writing Center cannot provide a proofreading/editing service or guarantee better grades; its primary purpose is to improve your writing in the long term. You can make appointments through the online scheduling system (<https://winthrop.mywconline.com/>).

Student code of conduct

Student Code of Conduct. As noted in the Student Conduct Code: "Responsibility for good conduct rests with students as adult individuals." The Student Life policy on student academic misconduct is outlined in the "Student Conduct Code Academic Misconduct Policy" in the online Student Handbook found at <http://www.winthrop.edu/studentconduct>. Academic dishonesty of any form (including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, falsifying information) may result in a student receiving a U for this course.

Winthrop University is committed to providing accessible learning experiences and equal access to education for all students. The syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. If you are a student with a disability (including mental health concerns, chronic or temporary medical conditions, learning disabilities, etc.) and you anticipate or experience academic barriers due to the condition, please contact The Office of Accessibility (OA) for information on accommodations, registration, and procedures. After receiving approval for accommodations through OA, please make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely manner. **OA contact information: accessibility@winthrop.edu; 803-323-3290; <https://www.winthrop.edu/student-affairs/accessibility/>.**

The Food Box (downloaded 8/21/22 from <https://www.winthrop.edu/cas/nutrition/the-food-box.aspx>)

In an effort to reduce food insecurity within the Winthrop community, the Department of Human Nutrition created The Food Box. The Food Box is a donation-based food pantry located in 308 Dalton Hall and it is accessible to the entire Winthrop community with no questions asked. In addition to shelf-stable food, The Food Box offers some personal care items such as toilet paper, soap, toothpaste, and feminine products.

How can I use The Food Box? Appointments for The Food Box can be made online or by phone.

Online: <https://calendly.com/thefoodbox/foodboxdropin>. Please note that making an appointment online will require your name and email address to confirm the appointment. We will not use this information for any other purpose, and use of the pantry is still on a no-questions-asked basis. If you prefer complete anonymity, please call the Department instead. Anonymous appointments can be made by calling the Department of Human Nutrition: 803/323-2101. If you leave a voicemail, you don't need to share your name but please provide a callback number so we can reach out and set up your appointment.

The [Center for Student Wellness](https://www.winthrop.edu/csw/our-services.aspx) supports the health and wellbeing of Winthrop students. We believe in the dignity, integrity, growth potential, and innate worth of the individual, and we offer services to foster whole-person health through prevention, education, assessment, treatment, and advocacy (see the mission statement on the "About Us" tab). In addition to Health Services and Promotion, the Office of Accessibility and Test Center, CSW provides counseling services and student advocacy and trauma support. You can learn more here:

<https://www.winthrop.edu/csw/our-services.aspx>.

Instructor's expectations of students, in addition to those specified elsewhere in this syllabus

- 1) You will let the instructor know as soon as possible, if you experience obstacles to class participation, resource access, or assignment completion. This includes communicating with the instructor early on if you have concerns. Dr. Fortner will do all she can to support your success.
- 2) You will come to class with key points from the readings, bring your assignments, and otherwise prepare for class; attend all of every class; and participate in every class. Communicate this to Dr. Fortner via email or text at your first opportunity.
- 3) You will be an active learner: raising questions, responding to instructor or peers' questions or comments, contributing to discussions both in and out of class, taking accurate and complete notes, attentively reading assignments, and sharing relevant resources with your classmates. Being an active learner also means focusing on the discussions we are having in class and that you will not text, email, or talk on your cell phone or other device while in class or in meetings with the instructor.
- 4) You will complete all assignments according to the directions, honorably, and by 11:59 pm the day they are due.
- 5) You will read the assigned chapters specified in the syllabus schedule before class and you will use other chapters and McNair resources to your benefit. Relevant McNair resources include the entire *EYE ON Graduate School* ePub by Sleigh, Iles, & Cannon, Eds (2017), Dr. Don Asher's (2012) text distributed this past summer, Sharma (2020), *Unwritten Rules of Professional Etiquette*, and Grenny, et al. (2022) *Crucial Conversations*, and the McNair biography.
- 6) You will utilize your McNair Director, Writing Coach, and Graduate Associate as resources in this class and throughout your graduate admissions and graduate funding processes. You can reach us in class, during office hours, by appointment, by e-mail, or text.
- 7) You will listen and interact effectively and sensitively with fellow Scholars, our guests, and me even when someone expresses a viewpoint that is very different from your own.
- 8) You will exhibit academic integrity at all times and follow the student conduct code found at: <http://www.winthrop.edu/studentconduct/>.

Tentative Schedule for Fall 2022 MCNR 302

Class	Class Focus	Relevant Readings	Assignment
8/26	Intro to course & Asking for references	Dr. F will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce our syllabus and many of our workshop materials Highlight LOR portfolio guidance from ASHER's Ch.9: Letters of Recommendation Lead discussion of Ch. 8: How to ask for a Letter of Recommendation in Sharma, R. (2020). <i>The Unwritten Rules of Professional etiquette: Building a positive reputation in graduate school</i>. Habile Press. Lydia Rodriguez tells us what her first week of graduate school is like.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> On your temp card, specify the type of graduate or professional program and when you expect to submit your applications. On your temp card, indicate the three people you intend to ask for references Read Eye on Grad School Ch. 11 Letters of Rec for Grad School: Purpose, Prep, Procedure, and Paragons On your temp card, specify your intended research product for fall 2022
9/2 CAS FA	Workday: Use today's class time to open 4 grad app portals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> EYE ON GS Ch. 11: Letters of Rec: Purpose, Prep, Procedure, and Paragons EYE ON GS Ch. 12: Link between Rec Letters & Your statement https://www.nsfgrfp.org/reference_writers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Submit in Blackboard (BB) your current list of graduate program titles and universities Find/borrow a copy of Asher book Submit your plan for research this semester
Class	Class Focus	Readings	Assignment
9/9	Building a positive reputation in Graduate School	Everyone reads the Intro, Chapter 1, and Concluding Thoughts in Sharma, R. (2020). <i>The Unwritten Rules of Professional etiquette: Building a positive reputation in graduate school</i> . Habile Press. **Scholars randomly assigned to lead discussion of Chapters 2 – 15 (see below)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Email Dr. F your reference portfolio draft with items 2-7 from checklist below Email your best personal statement draft to the Writing Coach and Dr. F
9/16 Dr. F's Family Weekend	Barb Yeager: Travelling on your own with McNair support	On your own, read Pipeline Chapter 4: Doctoral/Graduate/Professional Programs in Byrd, C. D., & Mason, R. S. (2021). <i>Academic Pipeline Programs: Diversifying Pathways from the Bachelor's to the Professoriate</i> . University of Michigan Press.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> In class, submit draft TA and TR forms from https://www.winthrop.edu/controllersoffice/ap-travel-expense-overview.aspx In BB Discussions, highlight one doctoral, graduate, or professional pipeline program. If you haven't already, schedule an appointment with the Writing Coach to discuss your timeline and goals for your statements
9/23	Dr. Jones & Fin Aid on Budgeting for Grad Study	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Making your way through Graduate School to Financial Security (available online at https://www.psichi.org/page/242EyeWinter19McClain) https://mcnairscholars.com/funding 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> On temp card, list name and deadline for 1 grad funding application Submit in BB proof of scheduling a meeting with ONCA Submit in BB your reference portfolio with items 1-7 in the checklist below

Class	Class Focus	Readings	Assignment
9/30 FC	Healthy strategies for managing stress in Grad School	Read these articles 1) ASHER Ch.3: Planning and Managing your Application Process 2) ASHER Ch.4: What Happens to your Application 3) EYE ON GS Ch. 6: Avoid the Kisses of Death in the Grad App process 4) EYE ON GS CH. 7: 7 Tips for preparing a successful application	No additional assignments - you deserve a break
10/7 CAS FA	Founders Fin Ed: Building good credit in grad school (no readings)		Work on your graduate funding/fellowship application and/or grad app statements of intent (no assignment submission this week).
Fall Break Friday October 14 – Monday October 17: No classes			
10/21	Workday: Work on Grad Apps	Read these articles 1) EYE ON GS Ch. 4: Finding your fit 2) EYE ON GS Ch. 9: What does your transcript say about you 3) EYE ON GS Ch. 14: Writing a compelling personal Statement 4) ASHER Ch.7: Subsequent Drafts	1) In class, on Temp Card, list top 3 lessons from your reading or our discussion of today's reading. 2) Submit in BB, two university-specific fit and match DRAFT paragraphs for personal statements
10/28	Preparing for tough high-stakes conversations	Everyone reads Chapters 1 and 13 in Grenny, J., Patterson, K., McMillan, R., Switzler, A., & Gregory, E. (2022). <i>Crucial conversations: Tools for talking when stakes are high</i> . McGraw Hill. **Scholars randomly assigned to lead discussion of Chapters 3 – 11 (below)	1) Sign up for at least two McNair Applicant interviewer time slots (interviews will take place 11/7 via Zoom)
11/4	Interviews & Communication	Everyone reads 1) EYE ON GS Ch. 15: The interview process 2) EYE ON GS Ch. 16: Acing the Interview	Work on funding application and grad program applications
Monday - 11/7 – Serve as interviewer for at least two 15-minute McNair applicant interviews 9 am - 6:30 pm			
11/11 Home-Coming	No class – continue your work on applications this week and meet with Dr. F		1) Submit in BB 5 questions you can bring with you to interviews 2) Complete a mock interview at winthrop.biginterview.com .
11/18 FC	Workday – make progress on grad apps and at least one funding app		
Thanksgiving Break Wednesday 11/23 – Friday 11/25: No Classes			
12/2 Last Class	The Finish Line is the Starting Line 1) EYE ON GS Ch. 17: Finding the right mentor: Gaining admission to and succeeding in GS 2) EYE ON GS CH. 18. Making the transition from UG 2 GS		1) Deadline for proof of research product, submit in BB 2) Submit in BB, grad funding application draft or proof of submission
12/13 by 9:00 pm (end of last fall 2022 exam period) Meet with Dr. F about AND Submit proof of 4 Grad App Drafts			

Reference Packet Checklist

Email **DRAFT** portfolio due 9/9; include items 2-7 to fortnerc@winthrop.edu

Upload to BB **FINAL** portfolio due 9/23; include items 1-7

1. Letter of introduction

- a. Remind your professors what **courses** and/or research you've completed with that professor and major compliments the professor bestowed on you about your work
 - b. List **leadership, community service, shadowing, or other relevant experiences** your reference may not know
 - c. Mention particular things **you hope your reference will speak about**
 - d. Include **test scores** (GRE, etc.) if you want the reference to know/mention/address/combat
 - e. List the **name of programs** at the Universities you are applying to
 - i. Tell the reasons each individual program is a **good fit** for you and you for it
 - ii. If appropriate, mention faculty and/or resources you're interested in working with at the institution
 - iii. Specify your **deadlines** (for Dr. F, organize the list in chronological order of deadline)
 - iv. Indicate the method of submission (e.g., online portal using attached login information, email link, etc.)
 - f. Share your gratitude
2. For references who were one of your professors, share a copy of your best writing assignment you submitted to that professor (e.g., a class assignment)
3. **Reprints of research presentation materials or manuscripts**
4. **Curriculum Vita**
5. **Unofficial Transcript or DegreeWorks printout**
6. **Completed FERPA Consent Release Form (e.g., <http://www.winthrop.edu/uploadedFiles/recandreg/CONSENT-FORRELEASE-EDUC-RECORDS.pdf>)**
7. **Draft of a statement of intent (optional, but strongly encouraged)**
8. **In the rare case where a recommendation is to be mailed** vs. uploaded or emailed, include hard copies of required recommendation materials.
- a. If requesting recommendations for several places, **separate materials by program** and group materials for each institution together.
 - b. If any graduate program requires hard copies of recommendation materials, **organize the materials** in a folder or envelope **so all pieces stay together**.
 - i. Be sure to **give a pre-addressed envelope** for each program that requires a mailed form
 - ii. Get McNair envelopes so the return address is already included
 - iii. Be sure to put the correct name and full address for grad program recipient of the
 - iv. Place appropriate postage on each envelope (if necessary).
 - v. **Use a post-it to indicate on each envelope the last date the letter must be postmarked**, faxed, emailed, or picked up by you
 - vi. Write "re: your name" in the bottom left corner of each envelope just in case your materials are mixed up with others
 - c. **Complete all of questions the applicant should know** including your name, name of program/position to/for which you are applying, your decision to waive/not waive your rights to view the letter (if applicable), name of reference (e.g., Dr. Cheryl Fortner), Reference's e-mail (e.g., fortnerc@winthrop.edu), how long have you known you/the reference (in years)
9. **Send a grateful message a week before your deadline.** For example, send an email that says something like: "Dr. Fortner, I am writing to thank you again for agreeing to write letters of recommendation for me. I know your schedule is busy and I am grateful for you for taking the time to work on those this week." Or "Dr. Yeager, Again, thank you for writing letters of reference for my graduate applications. I am writing to let you know I submitted all of my materials this week" This will show appreciation and serve as a reminder.
10. As soon as you learn **you've been accepted, let your reference know** so they can celebrate with you. Send a "Thank you" note. We have "Thank you" cards and stamps for you in the McNair office.